

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Punta Gorda
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Ya'axché wins National Energy Globe Award

Ya'axché Conservation Trust has won the prestigious National Energy Globe Award for its Sustainable Use Zones in the Golden Stream Corridor Preserve. The Energy Globe Award distinguishes projects regionally, nationally and globally that conserve resources such as energy or utilize renewable or emission-free sources. Over 182 countries participate and more than 2,000 projects are submitted annually to be considered for the prestigious environmental prize.

In southern Belize, Ya'axché is leading the implementation of Sustainable Use Zones within its Golden Stream Corridor Preserve (GSCP) in allowing communities to carry out their cultural traditions and livelihood practices within the 15,441 acre private protected area. Members of the buffering communities of Tambran, Golden Stream, Medina Bank and Indian Creek are privileged to extract materials for building and harvest plants used for cooking ingredients. The designation of an area for communities to extract non-timber forest products began in July 2006 with extensive consultations in buffering communities, and later, research and inventory into desired species that occur within GSCP.

Communities triggered the purchasing and establishment of the 15,441 acre GSCP, after local community leaders expressed their concerns over the potential exploitation by interested citrus and cattle ranch investors. Ya'axché's long term partner, Fauna & Flora International played an important role in realizing this vital corridor. GSCP connects the forests of the Maya Mountains to that of the Caribbean coastal plains and protects iconic species such as howler monkeys, jaguars, tapirs and great curassows.

Since 2006, Ya'axché has been approving permits to communities for extracting cohune leaves, vines used for tying, sticks for houses, basket tie-tie and firewood. Ya'axché's team has been monitoring the stocks and regeneration of the species utilized by communities to ensure its sustainability. Ya'axché believes that this can be incorporated in the management of other protected areas worldwide. Ya'axché is proud to receive the National Energy Globe Award for its Sustainable Use Zones for communities and conservation.

Ya'axché has been conserving wildlife and empowering communities in southern Belize since 1998. Much of the organization's effort has focused on supporting the livelihoods of eight communities and protecting over 151,000 acres of forests in southern Belize.

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